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Sen. James Merritt
Sen. Vaneta Becker
Sen. Phil Boots
Sen. Michael Delph
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. Ed Charbonneau
Sen. Vi Simpson
Sen. Earline Rogers
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Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. James Buck
Rep. William Davis
Rep. Thomas Saunders
Rep. Ed Soliday



JOINT STUDY COMMITTEE ON MASS TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

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Authority: IC 2-5-28 (Established by SEA 105-2007)

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: November 13, 2007
Meeting Time: 9:30 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 4

Members Present: Sen. James Merritt; Sen. Vaneta Becker; Sen. Phil Boots; Sen. Michael Delph; Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. Ed Charbonneau; Sen. Earline Rogers; Rep. Terri Austin, Co-Chairperson; Rep. Robert Bischoff; Rep. Nancy Dembowski; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Rep. James Buck; Rep. Thomas Saunders; Rep. Ed Soliday.

Members Absent: Sen. Thomas Wyss, Co-Chairperson; Sen. Vi Simpson; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Jean Breaux; Rep. David Niezgodski; Rep. Earl Harris; Rep. Phil Pflum; Rep. Vern Tincher; Rep. William Davis.

I. Call to Order

Representative Austin called the fourth meeting of the Joint Committee on Mass Transit

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

and Transportation Alternatives (Committee) to order at 9:45 a.m. Rep. Austin distributed copies of: (1) the minutes of the November 5 work group session; (2) draft recommendations formulated by the work group; and (3) a joint news release of the National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America concerning transportation spending.² Rep. Austin informed the Committee that URS Corporation would not be testifying at the meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

II. Karl Browning, Commissioner, Indiana Department of Transportation

Karl Browning, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), testified about INDOT's role in mass transit planning. INDOT's annual budget is approximately \$2 billion, of which \$161 million is designated for purposes other than highway construction and maintenance, such as mass transit. According to Commissioner Browning, \$100 million of the \$161 million is allocated for debt service, and the remaining \$61 million is either federal funding that passes through INDOT to local agencies or competitive grants administered by INDOT. Representative Austin questioned whether this dollar amount is adequate to expand mass transit in Indiana, and Commissioner Browning said that it is not.

Commissioner Browning stated that IC 8-23-9-55 requires INDOT to spend its funding on highways rather than mass transit.³ He stated that shifting three to five percent of automobile drivers to mass transit would be considered a success but would not decrease the funding needed for highway maintenance. He told the Committee that Indiana will need to increase its highway capacity for the foreseeable future. Commissioner Browning said that an interurban mass transit system would be the best fit for INDOT due to its similarity to the highway system.

Commissioner Browning told the Committee that INDOT has a cooperative relationship with the fourteen metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and participates in monthly meetings with the MPOs. Senator Rogers stated that she would like to see INDOT assume a larger role in planning mass transit, not just managing funds. Senator Boots asked whether INDOT has ever studied replacing highway lane miles with mass transit, and Commissioner Browning replied that all transportation studies contain an environmental impact statement that compares the cost effectiveness of the proposed transportation with other transportation alternatives, including mass transit. Commissioner Browning told Senator Boots that INDOT is not participating in a national high speed rail study. Representative Duncan urged INDOT to work creatively with the federal government to maintain Indiana's transportation funding.

III. United States Congressman Peter Visclosky

²See Exhibits A, B, and C.

³IC 8-23-9-55 provides:

Money in the state highway fund shall be used for the following:

- (1) Operation of the department.
- (2) Construction, reconstruction, operation, maintenance, and control of the state highways that are the responsibility of the department and of tollways that are the responsibility of the department under IC 8-15-3.

United States Congressman Peter Visclosky talked to the Committee about the proposed expansion of the South Shore Rail Line in northwest Indiana.⁴ The goal is to extend the rail line to Valparaiso and Lowell to create jobs and stimulate the economy by improving access to and from Chicago and reducing traffic congestion and pollution. The project is estimated to cost \$1 billion, with \$500 million coming from federal funding and \$500 million from a non-federal match. In 2006, over 4.2 million passengers rode the South Shore Rail Line, which is the third fastest growing commuter rail line in the United States.

Congressman Visclosky confirmed that the expansion project is using existing rights of way, which has helped reduce its cost. He stated that the federal funding is from the New Starts program, and he anticipates construction to begin within four years. Senator Rogers extended her thanks to Congressman Visclosky and asked what role he thinks the state should play in the expansion project. He told the Committee that the South Shore rail line is a prime example of a region taking advantage of its unique local benefits. He also stated that Indiana and Illinois local transportation agencies are cooperating on the project.

IV. Committee Discussion

Representative Soliday distributed the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission publication "Building a Regional Framework: Transit-Oriented Development" to Committee members.⁵

The Committee discussed the recommendations made by the November 5 work group.⁶ Senator Becker said the recommendations were very positive. The Committee agreed to add economic development to the list of disciplines included in the planning group in the fourth recommendation. At Senator Boots' suggestion, the Committee added a sixth recommendation urging INDOT to actively plan and promote high speed rail. The Committee approved the suggested recommendations by voice vote.

The Committee then reviewed the draft final report and approved it by voice vote.

V. Adjournment

Representative Austin adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

⁴See Exhibit D.

⁵See Exhibit E.

⁶See Exhibit B.